THE CHOICE.

A POEM.

By a Perſon of Quality.

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A

POEM.

1700

BOOK OF CHOICE

THE

THE CHOYCE.

IF Heav'n the grateful Liberty wou'd give,
That I might chuſe my Method how to live:
And all thoſe Hours propitious Fate ſhou'd lend,
In bliſsful Eaſe and Satisfaction ſpend.

Near ſome fair Town I'd have a private Seat,
Built Uniform, not little, nor too great:
Better, if on a riſing Ground it ſtood,
Fields on this ſide, on that a Neighb'ring Wood.
It ſhou'd within no other Things contain,
But what are Uſeful, Neceſſary, Plain:
Methinks, 'tis Nauſeous, and I'd ne'er endure
The needleſs Pomp of gawdy Furniture:
A little Garden, grateful to the Eye,
And a cool Rivulet run Murmuring by:
On whoſe delicious Banks a ſtately Row
Of ſhady Lymes, or Sycamores, ſhou'd grow.
At th'end of which a ſilent Study plac'd,
Shou'd with the Nobleſt Authors there be grac'd.
Horace and *Virgil*, in whoſe mighty Lines,
Immortal Wit, and ſolid Learning Shines.

Sharp *Juvenal*, and am'rous *Ovid* too,
Who all the turns of Loves ſoft Paſſion knew:
He, that with Judgment reads his Charming Lines,
In which ſtrong Art, with ſtronger Nature joyns,
Muſt grant, his Fancy do's the beſt Excel:
His Thoughts ſo tender, and expreſt ſo well;
With all thoſe Moderns, Men of ſteady Senſe,
Eſteem'd for Learning, and for Eloquence:
In ſome of Theſe, as Fancy ſhou'd adviſe,
I'd always take my Morning Exerciſe.
For ſure, no Minutes bring us more Content,
Than thoſe in pleaſing uſeful Studies ſpent.

I'd have a Clear and Competent Eſtate,
That I might live Genteelly, but not Great.
As much as I cou'd moderately ſpend,
A little more ſometimes t'oblige a Friend.
Nor ſhou'd the Sons of Poverty Repine
Too much at Fortune, they ſhou'd taſte of Mine;
And all that Objects of true Pity were,
Shou'd be reliev'd with what my Wants cou'd ſpare;
For what our Maker has too largely giv'n,
Shou'd be return'd in gratitude to Heav'n.
A frugal Plenty ſhou'd my Table ſpread,
With healthful, not luxurious Diſhes, fed:
Enough to ſatisfy, and ſomething more
To feed the Stranger, and the Neighb'ring Poor.
Strong Meat indulges Vice, and pampering Food
Creates Diſeaſes, and inflames the Blood.

But what's ſufficient to make Nature Strong,
And the bright Lamp of Life continue long,
I'd freely take, and as I did poſſeſs
The bounteous Author of my Plenty bleſs.

I'd have a little Cellar, Cool, and Neat,
With Humming Ale, and Virgin Wine Repleat.
Wine whets the Wit, improves its Native Force,
And gives a pleaſant Flavour to Diſcourſe;
By making all our Spirits Debonair,
Throws off the Lees, the Sedement of Care.
But as the greateſt Bleſſing Heaven lends
May be debauch'd, and ſerve ignoble Ends;
So, but too oft, the Grapes refreſhing Juice,
Does many miſchievous Effects produce.
My Houſe, ſhou'd no ſuch rude Diſorders know,
As from high Drinking conſequently flow.
Nor wou'd I uſe what was ſo kindly giv'n,
To the diſhonour of Indulgent Heav'n.
If any Neighbour came he ſhou'd be free,
Us'd with reſpect, and not Uneaſy be,
In my Retreat, or to himſelf, or me.
What Freedom, Prudence, and Right Reaſon give,
All Men, may with Impunity receive;
But the leaſt ſwerving from their Rules too much;
For what's forbidden Us, 'tis Death to touch.
That Life might be more comfortable yet,
And all my Joys refin'd, ſincere and great,
I'd chuſe two Friends, whoſe Company wou'd be
A great Advance to my Felicity.

Well born, of Humours ſuited to my own;
Diſcreet, and Men as well as Books have known.
Brave, Gen'rous, Witty, and exactly free
From looſe Behaviour, or Formality.
Airy, and Prudent, Merry, but not Light,
Quick in diſcerning, and in Judging Right;
Secret they ſhou'd be, faithful to their Truſt,
In Reaſoning Cool, Strong, Temperate and Juſt.
Obliging, Open, without huffing, Brave;
Briſk in gay Talking, and in ſober Grave.
Cloſe in Diſpute, but not tenacious, try'd
By ſolid Reaſon, and let that decide;
Not prone to Luſt, Revenge, or envious Hate;
Nor buſy Medlers with Intrigues of State.
Strangers to Slander, and ſworn Foes to ſpight,
Not Quarrelſom, but Stout enough to Fight:
Loyal and Pious, Friends to *Cæſar* true
As dying Martyrs to their Maker too.
In their Society I cou'd not miſs,
A permanent, ſincere, ſubſtantial Bliſs.

Wou'd bounteous Heav'n once more indulge, I'd chuſe
(For, who wou'd ſo much Satisfaction loſe,
As Witty Nymphs in Converſation give)
Near ſome obliging Modeſt-Fair to live;
For there's that ſweetneſs in a Female Mind,
Which in a Man's we cannot find;
That by a ſecret, but a pow'rful Art,
Winds up the Spring of Life, and do's impart
Freſh Vital Heat to the tranſported Heart.

I'd have her Reaſon, and her Paſſions ſway,
Eaſy in Company, in private Gay.
Coy to a Fop, to the Deſerving free,
Still conſtant to her ſelf, and juſt to me.
A Soul ſhe ſhou'd have for great Actions fit,
Prudence, and Wiſdom to direct her Wit.
Courage to look bold danger in the Face,
No Fear, but only to be proud, or baſe:
Quick to adviſe by an Emergence preſt,
To give good Counſel, or to take the beſt.
I'd have th' Expreſſions of her Thoughts be ſuch,
She might not ſeem Reſerv'd, nor talk too much;
That ſhows a want of Judgment, and of Senſe:
More than enough, is but Impertinence.
Her Conduct Regular, her Mirth refin'd,
Civil to Strangers, to her Neighbours kind.
Averſe to Vanity, Revenge, and Pride,
In all the Methods of Deceit untry'd:
So faithful to her Friend, and good to all,
No Cenſure might upon her Actions fall.
Then wou'd ev'n Envy be compell'd to ſay,
She goes the leaſt of Womankind aſtray.

To this fair Creature I'd ſometimes retire,
Her Converſation wou'd new Joys inſpire,
Give Life an Edge ſo keen, no ſurly Care
Wou'd venture to aſſault my Soul, or dare
Near my Retreat to hide one ſecret Snare.

But ſo Divine, ſo Noble a Repaſt,
I'd ſeldom, and with Moderation taſte.
For higheſt Cordials all their Virtue loſe,
By a too frequent, and too bold an uſe;
And what would cheer the Spirits in diſtreſs,
Ruins our Health when taken to Exceſs.

I'd be concern'd in no litigious Jarr,
Belov'd by all, not vainly popular:
Whate'er Aſſiſtance I had power to bring
T' oblige my Country, or to ſerve my King,
Whene'er they call'd, I'd readily afford,
My Tongue, my Pen, my Counſel, or my Sword.
Law Suits I'd ſhun with as much Studious Care,
As I wou'd Dens, where hungry Lyons are;
And rather put up Injuries, than be
A Plague to him, who'd be a Plague to me.
I value Quiet, at a Price too great,
To give for my Revenge ſo dear a Rate:
For what do we by all our Buſtle gain,
But counterfeit Delight for real Pain.

If Heav'n a date of many years wou'd give,
Thus I'd in Pleaſure, Eaſe, and Plenty live.
And as I near approach'd the Verge of Life,
Some kind Relation (for I'd have no Wife)
Shou'd take upon him all my Worldly Care,
While I did for a better State prepare.
Then I'd not be with any trouble vext,
Nor have the Evening of my Days perplext.

But by a ſilent, and a peaceful Death,
Without a Sigh, Reſign my Aged Breath:
And when committed to the Duſt, I'd have
Few Tears, but Friendly, dropt into my Grave.
Then wou'd my Exit ſo propitious be,
All Men wou'd wiſh to live and dye like me.

FINIS.